

DOUG -  
SOMEHOW WHEN I GOT  
HOME FROM YOUR PLACE  
SPRING 2005, THE ATTACHED  
PAPERS APPEARED IN MY  
STUFF.  
I AM RETURNING THEM  
TO YOU.

Ram

1/23/06

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(she was such a hard worker"), and all the problems he (we) had with back dues, imposing the  
new seniority system, hiring hall, fines.... I was working at Tenneco-Ducor at the time, heard horror stories of Coachella, 500  
workers descending on the tiny office. Ray is in good spirits and health. Sad news of the death of Pablo Carrizalez, one of  
the old timers in the Coachella Valley (about two weeks ago, I went to the rosary, took my union flag, which they draped on  
the coffin)...

And a great visit to Mario Bustamonte in Calexico (his wife, Gretchen, "La Lowie", was out of town, but we talked to her  
on the phone). He was one of the leaders of the lechugeros in the 1970-81 period, one of the elected reps fired by La Paz,  
runs a taxi company now. While he and Gilbert were going a mile a minute in Spanish, (I get about 40-80% but I also miss  
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On Sunday, Padilla went in to the farmers' market with me and my daughter, Rosa (Gilbert is her god father), and Liza  
Hirsch Medina came by and picked him up, took him to their house for fresh tamales. We went over after the market and a  
wonderful visit with Eliseo, just back from Texas, off next week to Argentina, Brazil, and Peru or somewhere (he gets around!),  
a player in the international labor movement, trying to build solidarity, an actor on the world stage...

and another old timer there, Juan Manuel Rodriguez (? I didn't remember him, but he was a great fan of  
Gilbert's), and a phone chat with Emie Cortez (I knew him in Texas in the 1960's) and his wife, Aricela (? I'm not sure of the  
name, didn't know her, but she was active in the Arizona campaign, Milwaukee boycott, who came by Eliseo's.....

Padilla and Rampujan are probably heading out Tuesday, but we have been hearing from various people that a service for  
Jessica is scheduled for April 9 at Hartnell College somewhere in Salinas, would very much want to go, car pooling? take the  
train? hope to be in touch with you all when there is agreement on the date).

We had wonderful discussions, about the early days and formation of the union, and the role of the historians of the  
movement, in deciding what to write, what material to present, what to edit out. Ram was saying he had given a lot of  
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Ram thought it should be; and my response, that that is the historian's job, to edit and choose what is to be written and  
preserved. LeRoy's project puts so many views and memories on the table, from the time when the Union's philosophy was  
"Let a thousand flowers bloom" to the times when all the emphasis was on discipline and loyalty, and anyone who stepped  
out of line faced the purge. Of course Gil and Esther were part of the establishment that helped get rid of people, until they  
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with her suitcase, all her belongings (David Burciaga picked her up and took her to his house; Barbara and Frank Ortiz were  
apparently the hatched people); accusations against Liza ("she's been a Communist since she was 13 years old!"); Nick  
Jones' multi-page letter defending himself against all the accusations.... the paranoia just took over... even the charges  
against Jessica Govea.... how sad...

And we were all in stitches reading a letter from Rudy Reyes, (Debbie's mom typed it up and we'll send it on)....

Best wishes to all, Viva la Causa...

Doug Adair, El Malcriado, 1965-1970

Emie's wife name is  
Oralia

Dear brothers and sisters,

We had a great visit from Gil Padilla and Rampujan (the former El Malcriado editor formerly known as Bill Esher), and I thought I would share some of the adventures...

Ray Huerta came by, nice visits with him, memories of the first contracts (1970-73) when he was field office director here in Coachella, "La Pamela" ("she was such a hard worker"), and all the problems he (we) had with back dues, imposing the new seniority system, hiring hall, fines.... I was working at Tenneco-Ducor at the time, heard horror stories of Coachella, 500 workers descending on the tiny office. Ray is in good spirits and health. Sad news of the death of Pablo Carrizalez, one of the old timers in the Coachella Valley (about two weeks ago, I went to the rosary, took my union flag, which they draped on the coffin)...

And a great visit to Mario Bustamonte in Calexico (his wife, Gretchen, "La Lowie", was out of town, but we talked to her on the phone). He was one of the leaders of the lechugueros in the 1970-81 period, one of the elected reps fired by La Paz, runs a taxi company now. While he and Gilbert were going a mile a minute in Spanish, (I get about 40-80% but I also miss quite a bit), I had a long talk with his teenage daughter, Ann, a tennis player and hoping to be an...ORGANIZER!.... and of course conflicted, the public image of Cesar as the near perfect saint, and then the stories she hears at home about how he and Dolores treated the workers' representatives when they wanted to nominate their own choices for the union executive board in 1981....How to be proud of all the good work we did under Cesar's leadership, but how to be honest about what went wrong... Also discussion of the 1979 convention (I didn't remember that one), when the lechugueros backed the strike, rather than all going out on the boycott (to the annoyance of the Exec Board).... and then won the strike. The old union office in Calexico, in the Hole (Hollo) still has the eagles and signs but looked abandoned, no contracts in the Imperial Valley now, the wages in the fields only slightly higher than the \$5 and hour benes that the lettuce workers won in 1979....

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April 6, 2004

Dear Leroy

I just received your letter asking for a little help in ameliorating your mounting expenses for your Farm workers project. I know that tho you are not doing the project under the auspices of the UFW, you are still being moved by the mantle of our La Causa. You are still in the movement, you did not quit in 1973, you are still in the movement, in the same aura, we all are. Same as I feel whenever I see a picket line anywhere, I stop and ask them what they're picketing for or against, and if it's in line with La Causa, I go home, put on my huelga cap and my huelga banner, off I go to the picket line, even if my gout and arthritis is paining me. If I or any co-worker is being unjustly treated, I don't remain as a toadstool, I always fight back, because that is what the union taught me - "fight back!"

I'll admit to what you're thinking Leroy, too many words, but where is the cheque? Sorry, Leroy, but some other time? I'm only working 2 days a week, and 3 more years before I could maybe get Social Security. Can't barely scrape together the dollar bills for my rent.

Although I don't have the money right now to help you out, my right hand is doing okay enough to write with. There are times when my arthritis won't even let me do so.

As I recall some of my crazy days in the union, there was a time when there were talks in the union that I tried to kill Cesar. This is the way it was, Leroy, not the way the gossipers said.

Mary Bernier and I were splitting up, we just weren't sure when. I was one of Cesar's guards, mostly at night, out in the backyard of his house. Usually Mary sleeps there too, under a mosquito net. In daytime, she works in the 40 acres building. After guarding at night, I get home to sleep a bit, then go to the El Malcriado shack to help Doug Adair and Sebastian Sahayun put out the paper.

The night before, Cesar's dog Huelga kept barking all night, got on my nerve so much, I really got so pissed off that I aimed the shotgun at it and pulled the trigger. Miraculously, I forgot that it was on "safety." I remembered later on that some of the kids sleeps behind that very thin wall.

Later in the morning, when I went to work at the Malcriado, Doug Adair was bitchy, and I was also, so I said, to hell with all these, and I quit. I walked across to the dispatch office, and I asked and got a dispatch form.

I went home to the room where Mary and I were living, picked her up for work. I was all incensed and fuming. On the way to the 40 acres, Mary and I got into a big argument. When I stopped at the stop sign in Garces ave, close to the 40 acres, Mary and our dog --

Wapato, jumped out of the car. I got out of the car, but I wasn't able to find them, there were big clumps of sage brushes and such.

When I got to the 40 acres, of all thunderation, my tire had a flat!! It took me a long time to change the tire. I still had the jack handle in my hand. I saw our dog Wapato by the admin. building, so I walked over. There was a staff meeting inside, and Cesar was presiding. He lit into me right away, and said - "when I say a meeting is such & such, it is to be such and such."

I got so pissed off, so I got into a full-blast tirade. I don't remember my exact words, but not in Amy Vanderbilt's social & etiquette's terminologies, but I asked since he is so stuck on such and such punctualities, where are the papers for my volkswagen? I've been badgering you guys for the papers so long, would I wait for my Social Security pension first? (I was about 28)

(You see, a year or so before then, the union, not wanting to be in charge of all the junk cars we were using, said that if we paid \$40, we would get the papers for our union cars into our names. I've been putting my \$5 a week into that, so I've finished that \$40 some months ago. Foregoing that \$5 a week in those days was the utmost sacrifice then, as I was a heavy smoker. Mary had to give me her \$5 a week for my smokes!) But to say that I tried to kill Cesar was ridiculous! He would have been dead! His bodyguards weren't that trained! And me with a jack-handle!

But anyway, Mary Bernier and I were split asunder, as the Good Book would have said. Whatever Shakespeare would have said I wouldn't garner a bit, that guy had quite a selection of words & phrases for whatever may befall to whomever, to wherever, whenever.

So, I was despondent. My friend Doug Adair tried to console me by giving me a psychedelic match box full of pot. I just put it in my pocket. I wasn't much on pot or any of those drugs some people uses. I'm crazy enough as I am, I always figured.

I drove my VW to Chinatown and picked up the wildest young Filipinos you'll every find. We picked-up a few more, the VW was crammed. And a few big bottles of Seagrams. We zigged and zagged thru Delano, and we swigged and swagged those bottles, and threw the empties thru the glass windows of bars. Patrons inside were sort of peeved, but none of them pissed enough to challenge us. But some of them did call the cops. Soon, cop cars were all over, but I didn't pay them no mind. About 6 cop cars, behind and beside us, and bullhorns were blaring telling me to pull over, but hell, we were having a hell of a party!

But they cornered me in front of our huelista hang-out "People's Bar." Cop cars behind me, front, & both sides!

I stumbled out of my car to find out whatever these no-good cops were up to. They didn't even inform me!! They just put the hand-cuffs on me!!

One of the cops guffawed and pointed at my white shirt pocket, which then showed so blatantly that colorful, flashing psychedelic match box of pot!!

So, to the back-seat of the cop car I was trundled to, without my consent, if I may say so. Then the cops were so intent on questioning my passengers, one of my friends was close to my door, so I signaled to him to open the door. He did, so I acted as nonchalantly as I could to walk to the People's Bar to say "howdy, what's up" and to sip some libation for my by-then parched gullet. But the cops weren't buying that, they hustled me back to the car and I got a fist in an eye, and I was already in cuffs! I said to them "wait till the ACLU hears of this!!

So, I was taken to the police station where I did my best cussing and swearing. They then took me to the Bakersfield hospital for tests & evaluation. Evaluate what? I'm feeling fine, I feel fine, officer! Believe me!

But whatever. I was in the hospital, with the same officer who slugged me in the eye. I told the doctor so. I don't know if he believed me. I was strapped in the gurney. When I was left alone with the cop, he was flexing his hands and wrists, so I started yelling and screaming, and when the doctors & nurses came, I told them that this same officer who slugged me in eye tried to strangle me! So, I was left alone in that room, thank goodness.

The minute I was left alone, I tried to slip from the straps. It was easy, the straps on my left was done slipshod. The other straps came off too, after telling myself to keep cool and to relax while unstrapping myself.

But my clothes were nowhere around the room. So, I just put on the gown that was on top of a table. It was a strip-tease gown, open in the back, so people could see your behind, while you walk around. So what? Nobody was paying me to look at my behind, but who would pay to look at my scrawny behind anyway?

When I got out of the room, the passage way was full of attendants and nurses. They all gawked at me and they were saying - "that's him! Yes, that's him." They strapped me back again, and didn't none of them paid a cent for that look at my behind. Scrawny tho it was, it was behind me now.

While I was in jail, the union's lawyer -- Daniel Boone, came to see me twice. He said the bail for me was too high. The charges against me were too many: DUI; possession of Illegal Drugs; assaulting officers; breaking numerous bar windows; possession of open containers of alcohol; 2 escape attempts; endangering the lives of citizens; etc., etc.

But Daniel Boone the lawyer said not to lose hope, "Cesar is burning lots of candle light at nights calling his friends & supporters in the Washington, D.C. State Departments for you."

After Daniel Boone's visit the first time, I wrote a letter to Mary Bernier to get me a new identity set. I told her that lawyer would tell me before the day of the verdict if it's good, bad or very bad. I told her where to send the I.D. set to if it was bad.

When the trial came, I went to the courtroom in prison garb (too long in the sleeves, too short in the legs, the seat wide enough for 3) shackles in the feet, handcuffs in the wrists, chain belts around the waists. Each chain-belt all chained to a long chain that kept all 18 of us together. When we entered the courtroom, I was so flabbergasted to see my friend Doug Adair, my lawyer Daniel Boone, and there's Mary Bernier!

And I was in shackles, chains, ill-fitting old frazzled prison uniform, my blacked eye blue all around it, uncombed hair, too. Although the lawyer gave me the okay signal, I wasn't sure how okay it was. All of us in the long chain had different charges against each of us. I was in the middle of the line.

I think it was only an arrangement, because some were only read their charges, their lawyers pleaded guilty or not guilty. When it was my time to plead, my lawyer pleaded guilty on some, not guilty on some. My heart was thumping. The judge and Daniel Boone palavered for a while in low tones, then the judge told me that my lawyer would talk to me later on.

After the rest of the chained men were all done, some were unchained, some were chained back again. I was freed! My lawyer whispered to me "Three." I gasped - "three years?!" And he just smiled -- "three years' probation!"

Well, Leroy, if somebody were to ask me now -- Rudy, when you were in the union, in all those years, was your heart always had been for AWOC, NFWA, UFWOC, AFL-CIO, LARRY ITLIONG, CESAR CHAVES, OR WHO OR WHEN?

QUE VIVA LA CAUSA!  
Rudy Reyes

P.S. Thanks for the disk, a friend has a computer, he's downloading or unloading it for me.

P.P.S. Leroy, before I went to that joy ride with my young Filipino friends, I've heard that during the Depression, a guy named Hoover promised the American people that very soon he'd make sure that every family would have 2 pots. I didn't go to college, so, so book-learning wasn't my meat and potatoes as the cowboys of the old west were won't to say. Just ears!

So, instead of 2 pots, I went a little bit more than an herbal doctor would have prescribed. I have a full dozen of small pots in my windows, on the east side, where the Sun would greet them with "whazzup!" every morning.

So, while I was in jail, I asked lawyer Boone to make sure that my friend Doug Adair was advised to go water my pots, or better yet, to take them home and rear them as if they were his own children. You see, Leroy, I'm not trusting of cops, never was. I figured even then that they might capture them and rear them instead, them guys would decapitate them, hang them upside down so that their saps would stay inside the branches.

My friend Doug Adair was very knowledgeable with such things. And I also heard that the sap, when dried, was then pulverized into what the smokers of such as "hash".

Furthermore, Leroy, when I made my own theses, (from encyclopedias) that's where the word "assassines" came from - "Hashhashins", means smokers of hash. Not the hash browns in the deli where I work. Those so-called "hash hasins" uses hash to give them vim in their daily endeavours.

So, when I got home after I was released, I asked Doug Adair where are my pet pots? He said he asked our friend FatsSanches to take care of them. So, I had to hunt up FatsSanchez, and he said the snails ate them. So, I just sat there for a while, staring at him, reminded me of the joke about the boy who, when asked by his teacher where his homework was, he said his dog ate it. What a tail! Bye now:

Rudy Reyes